

Amendments to the Claims

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-16 (canceled).

Claim 17 (new). A fast-acting agent for preparing cold and hot drinks from a drink base and drinking water, by contact with said drinking water for a period of a plurality of minutes, comprising cellulose fibers modified by chemical reaction with formation of phosphate ester groups and having an ion-exchange capacity of at least 50 mg of copper/g of dried fiber.

Claim 18 (new). The agent according to claim 17, wherein the cellulose fibers are modified by phosphorylation with phosphoric acid or ammonium phosphate up to a phosphorus content of from 3 to 8% by mass.

Claim 19 (new). The agent according to claim 17, wherein said cellulose fibers are further modified by chemical reaction with formation of carbamide groups up to a nitrogen content of at least 1% by mass present in the form of carbamide groups and a phosphorus content of from 3 to 8% by mass.

Claim 20 (new). The agent according to claim 19, wherein said carbamide groups are formed by chemical reaction of said cellulose fibers with urea.

Claim 21 (new). The agent according to claim 17, wherein the amount of modified cellulose fibers used is from 0.5 g to 4 g per liter of drinking water.

Claim 22 (new). The agent according to claim 19, wherein the upper limit of the nitrogen content is 4% by mass.

Claim 23 (new). The agent according to claim 19, wherein the phosphorus content is from 5 to 6.5% by mass and the nitrogen content is from 2 to 3% by mass and the ion-exchange capacity is in the range from 100 to 130 mg of copper/g of dried fiber.

Claim 24 (new). The agent according to claim 17, wherein the period of contact is from 3 to 10 min.

Claim 25 (new). The agent according to claim 17, wherein at least some of said phosphate ester groups are phosphate ester salts selected from the group consisting of sodium, potassium, and magnesium phosphate ester salts.

Claim 26 (new). The agent according to claim 25, wherein the modified cellulose fiber is converted into the sodium, potassium or magnesium form by subsequent treatment with a sodium, potassium, or magnesium salt solution.

Claim 27 (new). The agent according to claim 25, wherein the modified cellulose fibers are converted into an acid/potassium or acid/magnesium form by subsequent treatment with an acidified salt solution and the fraction of free acid form has a pH of > 3 in water.

Claim 28 (new). A bag comprising water-permeable and food-standard material and an agent according to claim 17.

Claim 29 (new). A wet strength paper product comprising wet-strengthened paper and an agent according to claim 17.

Claim 30 (new). A non-woven fabric having a weight per unit area of from 100 to 500 g/m² and comprising fibers and an agent according to claim 17.

Claim 31 (new). A water-permeable bag comprising fibers and an agent according to claim 17.

Claim 32 (new). A feed material for production of tea bags comprising fibers and an agent according to claim 17.

Claim 33 (new). A method to achieve a fast-acting taste improvement in the preparation of a drink from water and a drink base, wherein cellulose fibers modified by chemical reaction with formation of phosphate ester groups and by chemical reaction with formation of carbamide groups up to a nitrogen content of at least 1% by mass present in the form of carbamide groups and a phosphorus content of from 3 to 8% by mass, in the form of loose fibers, paper-like pieces, or as nonwoven fabric, are immersed in the preparation water for hot or cold drinks and removed therefrom after a plurality of minutes..

Claim 34 (new). The method of claim 33, wherein the fibers are in the form of paper-like pieces or nonwoven fabric as additive to lay in tea bags or as feed material for producing tea bags.

Claim 35. (new). The method of claim 33, wherein the drink base is coffee or tea.